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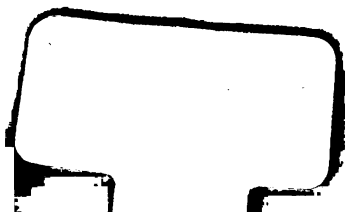
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U.S. Library of Congress.

Rules and practice governing
the use and issue of books.



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RY OF CONGRESS

**RULES AND PRACTICE
GOVERNING THE USE AND ISSUE
OF BOOKS**

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

RULES AND PRACTICE (1908) GOVERNING THE USE AND ISSUE OF BOOKS

PRIOR to 1897 the privileges of the Library were defined, in the earlier years, by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House in conference, and later by statute as interpreted by the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library. By the appropriations act of 1897, which provided for the administration of the Library in the new building, the authority to "make rules and regulations for the government of the Library" was vested in the Librarian.

The "regulations" now in force represent a body of practice rather than a formal set of definitions adopted at one time, or *a priori*. They are the result of decisions reached during the past ten years in dealing with particular cases upon their merits. The following paragraphs are an attempt to summarize and, in certain respects, to define the persons who may draw books, the books that may be drawn, the use permitted, and the facilities for use.

For reference use the Library is absolutely free, without introduction or credential, to any inquirer from any place; and it is open from 9 a. m. until 10 p. m., and on Sundays and most holidays from 2 p. m. until 10 p. m.

The purpose of the administration is the freest possible use of the books consistent with their safety, and the widest possible use consistent with the convenience of Congress. The general reader is supposed to carry on his work in the Main Reading Room.* If, however, he is pursuing investigations requiring access to the books upon the shelves, he will be admitted to the shelves if his work imperatively demands it, and if he can not be served by having the books brought to him. Such access is, of

*The Law Library, a part of the Library of Congress, is located at the Capitol in the old Supreme Court chamber, which is on the floor below the present Supreme Court chamber. From October 1 to June 15 it is open from 9 a. m. to 10 p. m., except during the Christmas recess, when it is closed at 4.30 p. m. From June 15 to October 1 it is open from 9 a. m. to 4.30 p. m., except on Saturdays during July and August, when it closes at 12.30 p. m. It is closed on Sundays. Though the collection is accessible to any inquirer, it is for the use particularly of Congress and of the Bench and Bar of the United States Supreme Court and the Court of Claims. It is the lack of adequate accommodations for readers and the administration that prevents the Law Library from being open to law students or the public generally. For their use a collection of several thousand volumes has been placed in the Library of Congress in alcoves adjoining the Reading Room. At the main Library also (in the North Curtain) is the collection of international and foreign laws.

course, subject to the convenience of the administration. If a reader is engaged in research involving the continuous use of a number of the same books day after day, he will be given a table in an alcove, where they may be set aside for him; if he desires to dictate to a stenographer, a separate room, where he may do so without inconvenience or publicity. Ink is not supposed to be used, but may be by special permit in cases of necessity.

There is no limit to the number of books a reader may draw for reference use. For books from the stacks to be used in the Reading Room he makes out a call slip, signing his name and residence. But there are available to him without this formality, or the intervention of an attendant, some 15,000 volumes of reference books in this room, 2,700 current newspapers and periodicals in the Periodical Reading Room, and much material in other parts of the Library.

Material of special rarity is, of course, examined only under special supervision. But so far as possible such supervision is substituted for prohibition, restriction, or formal process. This practice is particularly pursued in the divisions handling the manuscripts, maps, prints, etc.

Requests are occasionally received from organizations to hold their meetings in the Library building. The Library has no meeting room to be used for such a purpose. A club carrying on studies which require the use of books, prints, or other material in the Library can, however, have such material set aside for examination and discussion in a space specially assigned for the purpose.

Photographing is freely permitted. The permission extends to the building itself and any of its parts, including the mural decorations. It extends to articles bearing claim of copyright, but the Library gives no assurance that the photograph may be reproduced or republished or placed on sale. These are matters to be settled with the owner of the copyright.

In the very early years (*circa* 1815), and again from about 1884-1894, the privilege of drawing books for home use was permitted to any resident of the District making a deposit as security. From time to time since then, and especially before the Public Library was in efficient operation in its new building, appeals have been made for the revival of this privilege. A communication from the Librarian to the

Chairman of the Senate Library Committee, January 27, 1903, was induced by such an appeal, which caused the introduction of a resolution into the Senate. The view held was adverse to the proposal to make the National Library a general circulating library, but emphasized the sympathy of the authorities with every application for the home use of books resting upon a serious need not to be satisfied by reference use nor by the Public Library of the District. A distinction is easy, for the function of the latter is peculiarly to aid the general reader and the younger reader, including the pupils of the common schools. This leaves to the Library of Congress the investigator proper.

The statutory designations of persons (rather classes) within the District who should have the privilege of books for home use are as follows: President, Vice-President, Ex-Presidents of the United States, Senators, Representatives, Delegates, Heads of Departments, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, Reporter of the Supreme Court, Clerk of the Supreme Court, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Judges of the Court of Claims, Clerk of the Court of Claims, Solicitor-General, Assistant Attor-

Classes of borrowers designated by statute

neys-General, Secretary of the Senate, Clerk of the House of Representatives, Chaplains of the two Houses of Congress, Solicitor of the Treasury, the Financial Agent of the Joint Committee on the Library, Smithsonian Institution through its Secretary, Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Members of the Interstate Commerce Commission, Secretary of the Interstate Commerce Commission, Chief of Engineers of the Corps of Engineers of the United States Army, Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, Associate Justices of the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia.

They were not adopted at one but at various times, and are therefore by no means comprehensive of the needs, or of the claims, of the official classes at Washington. The issue of books to the classes designated by statute is of course free from any such limitation as that they must be required for serious investigation.

The privileges of the Senator or Representative extend also to all members of his immediate household and to his secretary. They can not, however, be extended to

other persons merely upon his recommendation. As to this the rule has been interpreted by the Library Committee of Congress as follows:

"No books should be given out upon the orders of Members in favor of those who are not Members.

"This is directly contrary to the law which confines the delivery of books to Members themselves and other specified persons. If a Member sends an order for a particular book which he wants, he is entitled to it; but if it be an order in favor of another person, or for such other person's use, it can not be delivered according to law."

The above instructions were issued years ago, when the Library was still at the Capitol. Reason for them still exists where the purpose is to favor one resident general reader with privileges that can not be accorded to others.

A resident of the District engaged in serious investigation, and having some special need which can not be met by reference use, may apply to the Librarian for a special permit which may meet this need.

The Library being primarily for the use of Congress, although it has also grown to serve many other uses, the privileges of home use of books during the sessions are

quite freely extended to clerks of committees of Congress and all officials connected with the operations of Congress.

Members of the Press Galleries have a continuing privilege of drawing books upon formal deposit of \$5.

The duty of the National Library is to aid the unusual need with the unusual book, not only by supplying a reader on the premises, but by making books available to the research worker even if he is not in Washington. When, therefore, it receives a call for a book in its possession which is not accessible to the applicant elsewhere, and it is a book required by him for serious investigation, and it can at the moment be spared from Washington, it is lent, through another institution.

The principles governing the operation of the interlibrary loans are described in the following memorandum, which was put forth as a circular at the inception of the system:

"Under the system of interlibrary loans the Library of Congress will lend certain books to other libraries for the use of investigators engaged in serious research. The loan will rest on the theory of a special service to scholarship which it is not within the

power or the duty of the local library to render. Its purpose is to aid research calculated to advance the boundaries of knowledge, by the loan of unusual books not readily accessible elsewhere.

"The material lent can not include, therefore, books that should be in a local library, or that can be borrowed from a library (such as a State library) having a particular duty to the community from which the application comes; nor books that are inexpensive and can easily be procured; nor books for the general reader, mere textbooks, or popular manuals; nor books where the purpose is ordinary student or thesis work, or for mere self-instruction.

"Nor can it include material which is in constant use at Washington, or whose loan would be an inconvenience to Congress, or to the Executive Departments of the Government, or to reference readers in the Library of Congress.

"Genealogies and local histories are not available for loan, nor are newspapers, the latter forming part of a consecutive historical record which the Library of Congress is expected to retain and preserve; and only for very serious research can the privilege be extended to include volumes of periodicals.

"A library borrowing a book is understood to hold itself responsible for the safe-keeping and return of the book at the expiration of ten days from its receipt. An extension of the period of loan is granted, upon request, whenever feasible.

"All expenses of carriage are to be met by the borrowing library.

"Books will be forwarded by express (charges collect) whenever this conveyance is deemed necessary for their safety. Certain books, however, can be sent by mail, but it will be necessary for the borrowing library to remit in advance a sum sufficient to cover the postal charges, including registry fee.

"The Library of Congress has no fund from which charges of carriage can be prepaid."

A service of the Library distinct from that involved in the actual loan of books is that performed by answer to inquiry through correspondence. The character of the questions which the Library answers most willingly is noted below:

1. As to its possession of a particular book.
2. As to the existing bibliographies on a particular subject.

3. As to the most useful existing authorities on a particular subject and where they may be available.

4. As to the author of a book by a known title.

5. As to the date, price, and probable present cost of a specified book.

6. For the source of a particular quotation, if ascertainable by ready reference.

7. (If not requiring elaborate research) for other particular facts in history or literature; in the organization or operations of the Federal Government.

8. (Where of moderate extent) for an extract from a book in its possession.

Its ability to make extracts or to undertake research (other than purely bibliographic) is necessarily limited, and its usual course is to refer the inquirer to the sources and recommend to him a person to undertake the search or make the extract at his expense. Especially must it do this where the inquiry involves genealogical research beyond a single reference.

Its willingness to compile lists of authorities has led to demands which it can not readily meet, particularly from students in secondary schools or colleges. The Library now requests such students to make their inquiries through the institution in which

